

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: KEY TO SUCCESS FOR NAVY CIVILIAN WORKFORCE TRANSFORMATION

BY

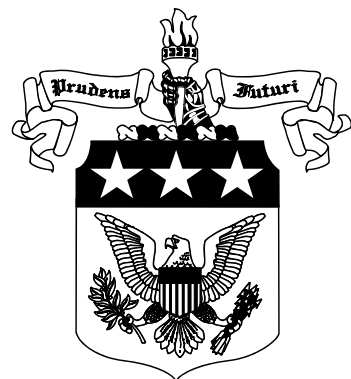
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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: KEY TO SUCCESS FOR NAVY CIVILIAN WORKFORCE TRANSFORMATION

by

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ABSTRACT

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Naval transformation is dedicated to greatly expanding U. S. military options across the full spectrum of warfare by exploiting our control of the sea. The goal of transformation is to have a sustainable, immediately deployable Navy-Marine Corps Team ready to project U.S. joint combat power to meet any challenge. In order to achieve this far-reaching objective, the Navy has developed a transformation process known as Sea Enterprise, which will take the lead on freeing up financial and human resources for recapitalization through aggressive streamlining of naval business processes. This paper will address how leadership can be developed and applied toward ensuring the success of Sea Enterprise and achieving the goals of naval transformation. It will review current Navy practices for developing leadership, investigate current academic theory on the relationship between leadership and change, and examine the latest theories on leadership development. The goal is to determine the intrinsic value of leadership in the organizational change process and to develop some recommendations for fostering and applying leadership in a cost-effective, sustainable, and self-propagating manner.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: KEY TO SUCCESS FOR NAVY CIVILIAN WORKFORCE TRANSFORMATION

You have to learn to stomach chaos and confusion if you're going to be leading people in the midst of conflicting values, who are facing hard challenges and engaging in all sorts of avoidance behavior.

—Ronald Heifetz

The Navy has developed Sea Power 21 (SP 21) as their strategic vision for naval operations in the 21st century. Sea Enterprise, the business process improvement plan for SP 21, is seen as the chief resource provider for all the other strategic plan components. The transformative processes of Sea Enterprise rely heavily on enhanced leadership skills to achieve success. This thesis will examine the current leadership development programs embraced by the Navy and compare their content and delivery with that of the U.S. Army programs. Current research concerning the essential characteristics of leadership, the relationship between leadership and change, and a new method for teaching leadership skills will also be reviewed. The goal will be to determine if meaningful, sustainable, and cost-effective leadership practices and techniques can be synthesized and implemented from elements described by the leading world experts on the subject.

Naval Transformation Roadmap

The 2003 Naval Transformation Roadmap (NTR), a joint Navy – Marine Corps Team publication, is a detailed plan for developing, implementing, and integrating the goals of the Department of Navy's *Sea Power 21* vision and the Marine Corps' *Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare* concept. The NTR foundation rests on our existing asymmetric strategic advantage – command of the sea – and seeks to maximize our

ability to seabase joint offensive and defensive operations. The Navy – Marine Corps Team plans to enhance and operationalize our current seabasing capability through three interdependent and synergistic Naval Capability Pillars (NCPs), known as Sea Shield, Sea Strike, and Sea Base. A fourth NCP, known as FORCEnet, will expand and integrate the current information technology backplane of weapons systems, networks, and sensors into a single comprehensive maritime command and control network.¹ All four of the NCPs support the deployment, employment, and sustainment elements of the Major Combat Operations requirement described in the Department of Defense (DoD) Joint Operating Concepts (JOCs) doctrine, while specific elements of the other NCPs support the overall DoD JOCs requirements for Stability Operations, Strategic Deterrence, and Homeland Security.²

To realize this unprecedented revolution in joint naval operational thinking, the Navy developed three critical enabling strategies. The first, Sea Warrior, is the human resource component of the transformational vision. It seeks to maximize human capital and enhance fleet readiness by integrating, wherever possible, joint training and education in the professional development of Sailors and Marines. Some of the early Sea Warrior initiatives involve the development of an Information Operations Career Force, the creation of a Naval Space Cadre, the curricula integration of the Naval War College and the Marine Corps University, and the insertion of cutting-edge technology into the naval personnel system. The ultimate goal of Sea Warrior is to integrate and bundle all of the human resource core processes, including career planning, personnel distribution, and mission performance (Fleet) readiness into a web-based, information-rich environment.³ Of particular relevance to the subject matter of this article is that Sea

Warrior is also involved with managing the Total Force Manpower (active, reserve, civilian, contactors) in order to deliver fleet readiness in the most economical manner. The goal is to make funds available to enable and support transformation through the “...replacement of non-military essential uniformed manpower in our infrastructure with civilians and contractors.”⁴

The second enabling strategy of the NTR is Sea Trial, an integrated process for the rapid formulation and testing of innovative operational concepts and breakthrough technologies which can be quickly introduced into the field environment through changes in doctrine, organization, training, material, personnel, etc. In Sea Trial initiatives, the fleet participates in the experimentation phase in order to bring operational experience and realism to the process and to foster a greater level of personal commitment to the transformation initiative among front line personnel.⁵

The final enabling strategy of NTR, which will be a focal point of this article, is Sea Enterprise. In the words of the NTR:

Sea Enterprise is the flagship effort for freeing up additional resources to support military transformation initiatives through streamlining naval business processes. Involving the Navy Headquarters, the systems commands, and the Fleet, Sea Enterprise seeks to improve organizational alignment, refine requirements, and reinvest savings to buy the platforms and systems needed to transform the naval contribution to the joint force. Drawing on lessons learned from the business revolution, Sea Enterprise will reduce overhead, streamline processes, substitute technology for manpower, and create incentives for positive change. Legacy systems and platforms no longer integral to mission accomplishment will be retired, and we will make our Department's business processes more efficient to achieve enhanced warfighting effectiveness in the most cost-effective manner.⁶

However, other than the general statements made in the paragraph above, the NTR offers little specific guidance on how Sea Enterprise will achieve the lofty goal of supporting Navy recapitalization requirements. In fact, of the ninety-four page NTR

document, only six paragraphs are dedicated to Sea Enterprise and, other than general descriptions of the Sea Enterprise Board of Directors, Marine Corps Requirements and Oversight Council, and some executive education programs, there is no information related to any specific initiatives or pilot programs already underway.

Sea Enterprise Transformation Enablers

Since the publication of the NTR in 2003, the National Security Personnel System (NSPS) was put in place by the DoD as a primary transformation enabler and the Navy selected Lean Six Sigma (L6S) as their process change mechanism of choice. In 2007, the Navy deployed NSPS across-the-board at a number of headquarters commands and on a partial basis at a number of “hybrid” Navy military-civilian field activities. At those field activities with employees represented by Union bargaining units, only supervisors and some other professional, managerial, and executive support personnel were converted to the new system. NSPS is a personnel system based upon tailored and individualized performance measures, which offers “pay for performance” as one of its chief incentives. Under NSPS, *supervision*, not technical expertise or program management, must become the primary focus of supervisors. Success depends heavily on applying sophisticated leadership skills via coaching and mentoring to develop and nurture a highly collaborative working relationship with individual employees.⁷ This will represent a very big challenge to supervisors reared in a hierarchical, techno-centric bureaucracy, especially when you consider that “hybrid” activity employees, through whom the supervisors must achieve their performance goals, are not subject to the new personnel system. In a similar vein, L6S is a highly-disciplined change methodology employed extensively throughout the private sector. It offers a wide-ranging “toolbox” of

process-mapping techniques and managerial approaches to achieve successful process change. However, similar to NSPS, L6S is very dependent on the individual process change manager having strong leadership skills and applying them in an effective manner in order to achieve success. To paraphrase an old analogy, L6S will *lead the horse to water*, but it will take leadership to *get the horse to drink*.

Current research and recent history would indicate that the goals of Sea Enterprise will be very hard to achieve. A 2005 research thesis from the Naval Postgraduate School indicated that, at that point in time, clarity and consensus had not been achieved in regard to the makeup and scope of Sea Enterprise initiatives.⁸ Furthermore, the DoN budget management database, the Program Budget Information System (PBIS), was suffering from numerous shortcomings related to its ability to track, collect, and attribute actual cost savings data.⁹ More significantly, in the area of overhead cost reduction, significant “low hanging fruit” has already been harvested during previous DoN organizational realignments and “right-sizing” initiatives over the past two decades, especially at the Navy systems commands. Figure 1 is the actual personnel downsizing track for a large Navy field organization. For the period FY87 to FY07, this particular organization reduced total personnel levels by more than 67%. While other field organizations may not have experienced personnel reductions as dramatic as this, the graph serves as a valid notional representation of what has typically occurred at most Navy business organizations over the last twenty years. Since personnel costs typically represent about 85-90% of the total operating budgets at Navy business organizations, any plan to harvest further significant savings from overhead (personnel) cost reductions must be aware of these past accomplishments..

Clearly, one of the sources of potential savings identified in the NTR (overhead reductions) has already been significantly harvested, at least at the Navy's acquisition and business activities. That means a bigger share of the recapitalization requirements will have to come from the much more difficult task of streamlining and/or eliminating non-value added process steps. This is especially challenging when dealing with very complex end-to-end processes that stretch across multiple agencies and jurisdictions. Highly bureaucratic and management-intensive organizations, like most DoD activities, often experience serious challenges and limited success when trying to achieve broad or sweeping process change. This is true because success in these endeavors is much more dependent on the application of highly attuned leadership practices, rather than the utilization of sophisticated technical expertise or business management acumen. Typically, "...successful transformation is 70 to 90 percent leadership and only 10 to 30 percent management."¹⁰ Therefore, one of the keys to successful transformation is viewing the challenge as one of *leading* the change, rather than *managing* it.

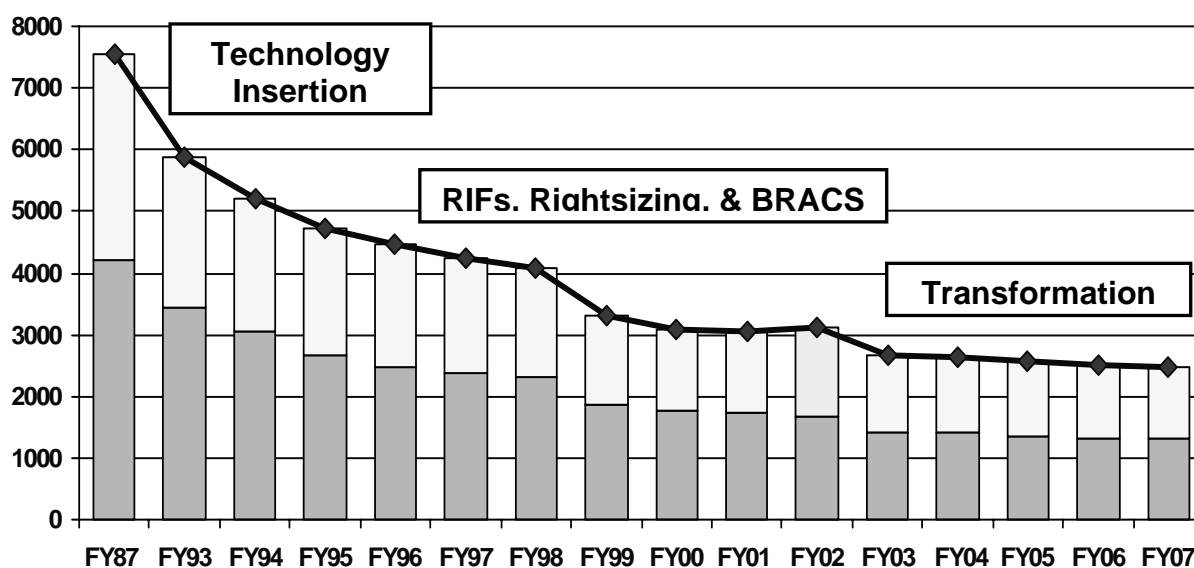


Figure 1: Notional Downsizing Track¹¹

The Role of Leadership in the Change Process

There is considerable literature devoted to the subject of organizational change and a significant amount of it focuses on the greater importance of leadership ability, rather than management skills, in the change process. This is because management typically focuses on the day-to-day operational functions, such as planning, budgeting, organizing, staffing, controlling, and problem solving. It is geared to producing a certain level of organizational predictability and order and to providing a foundation and process for achieving short-term results. Conversely, leadership is associated with establishing an organizational direction or vision, aligning people and building coalitions via constant communication, and motivating and inspiring people to overcome bureaucratic, political, and resource barriers by satisfying their basic, but often unfulfilled, human needs. Due to these fundamental differences in nature and application, leadership is always a more essential and mandatory element for producing dramatic and useful change.¹²

To some degree, today's skewed corporate focus on management skills versus leadership ability is a product of our history. The 20th century saw tremendous growth in the number of complex, large-scale organizations and bureaucracies, both in the private and public sectors. Maintaining control and order within these ever-expanding complex entities drove a focus on developing managers and both organizations and universities began developing management programs.¹³ The level of success experienced by many organizations in the 20th century led to a validation of the management intensive model. Consequently, this overriding emphasis on management skills over leadership ability has spread throughout many corporate cultures and it has discouraged employees from developing the necessary skills to lead.¹⁴ Juxtaposed to this development, changes in the global business environment combined with growing resource constraints in the 21st

century have driven an unprecedented level of organizational need for business process transformation. John P. Kotter, possibly the world's foremost expert on the subject of leadership, summarizes how this historical overemphasis on management can stymie an organization's effort to transform.

Arrogant managers can overevaluate their current performance and competitive position, listen poorly, and learn slowly. Inwardly focused employees can have difficulty seeing the very forces that present threats and opportunities. Bureaucratic cultures can smother those who want to respond to shifting conditions. And the lack of leadership leaves no force inside the organization to break out of the morass.¹⁵

In his book, *Leading Change*, Mr. Kotter outlines the most commonly made errors that lead to ineffective or short-lived organizational transformations and, not surprisingly, other world renowned theorists, such as James Kouzes and Barry Posner, have made similar observations that concur with his assertions. Certainly, there are other change process mistakes that organizations can make, but his research over two decades found these following errors to be the most serious and typical pitfalls and all of them involve a lack or misapplication of effective leadership:

Allowing Too Much Complacency

There are a number of origins for organizational complacency, ranging from internally-focused metrics and low overall performance standards to simple human nature and an aversion to change.¹⁶ Unfortunately, to effectively implement significant change in an organization requires dedication and cooperation from many individuals. Experience shows that the required percentage of working-level personnel with committed involvement may be as high as 15% to 25%, depending on the complexity and size of the organization.¹⁷ As a result, organizational leaders must passionately and effectively communicate either the immediacy of an impending crisis or the potential of

an unrealized opportunity because “...people first follow the person, then the plan.”¹⁸

Several studies have determined that it requires about 75% of an organization's management, including virtually all of the senior executives, to be honestly convinced that business as usual is totally unacceptable and that a crisis exists before meaningful change efforts can be expected to succeed.¹⁹ Any level of managerial commitment lower than this will produce serious challenges later on in the transformative process.

Failing to Create a Sufficiently Powerful Guiding Coalition

In the past, change management efforts were usually led by the powerful CEO or the credibility-starved staff committee, and they often failed. These old paradigms are totally inoperable in today's business environment. In both the private and public sectors, a powerful guiding coalition is necessary to ensure the success of business transformation. In a Navy military-civilian “hybrid” organization, the military leadership must determine which of the civilian executives and senior managers are committed to increased process efficiency through change. This group need not include all senior leaders, but, to be successful, it must include members who are powerful in terms of their position and who possess technical expertise, credibility, and proven leadership versus pure management skills.²⁰ Because the need for technical expertise, the guiding coalition will likely include members, who are not part of the senior management team, and it will tend to operate both within and outside the normal hierarchical rules.²¹ This may be a difficult fact for a military organization to accept, but it is essential to forming a powerful guiding coalition.

Underestimating the Power of Vision

As defined by Mr. Kotter, strategic vision is "...a picture of the future with some implicit or explicit commentary on why people should strive to create that future."²²

Successful transformations involve a developed picture of the future that is relatively easy to communicate and appeals to customers, stakeholders and employees.²³ A

carefully crafted vision is important because change will almost always force people out of their comfort zone. It could mean that they will have to work with fewer resources in the future or that they will be required to learn new skills and develop new abilities or, in some cases, that the new vision will lead to their current position being eliminated.²⁴

Therefore, a good vision engenders employee support by acknowledging that current sacrifices may be necessary, but that the resultant change will yield tangible benefits and personal satisfactions far superior to those available today.²⁵ Effective visions must be focused enough to set corporate direction and guide employee actions, while, at the same time, they must be open ended enough to allow for individual initiative and changes in the business environment. It is important to remember that "...leaders cannot command commitment, only inspire it."²⁶

Undercommunicating the Vision by a Factor of Ten (or 100 or even 1000)

Depending on the size of an organization, successful transformation is possible only if hundreds (or even thousands) of people are willing to make very real short-term sacrifices because even if people are dissatisfied with the status quo, they will not be motivated to make the necessary sacrifices unless they understand and believe in the organization's vision.²⁷ This emphasizes the importance of having a committed and powerful guiding coalition and of ensuring adequate and appropriate communication of

the vision message. Research demonstrates that what might appear to organization executives as an adequate amount of communication on the vision message is often woefully inadequate when considered in the context of the total volume of corporate communication.²⁸ Just as important as communication adequacy is the need for the vision message to be simple in structure, repeated often, and conveyed through a wide variety of forums and media. Like many other leadership theorists, Mr. Kotter endorses the use of metaphors and analogies to convey the vision message in a recognizable and easily understood format.²⁹ Even though it requires more resources, some use of a dialogue-based two-way communication is preferable to limiting the deployment of a new vision through simple one-way communication. Well-educated personnel in a professional organization are much more likely to buy-in to a new vision if they have had the opportunity to ask questions, challenge assumptions, and argue points.³⁰ This may be somewhat repetitive of the process undertaken by the guiding coalition in developing the vision, but can often be the deciding factor in achieving employee commitment. One final element of effective communication is the need for leadership at all levels to always *walk the talk* because doing so establishes credibility through behavior. “Credibility is one of the hardest attributes to earn and to sustain”, but it is the essence and foundation of leadership.³¹

Permitting Obstacles to Block the New Vision

Transformation requires the removal of barriers to change. Generally, these obstacles appear in the form of: entrenched, intractable organizational structures; personnel with inadequate knowledge or skills; management information and personnel systems that are misaligned with the new vision; or key management and supervisory

personnel, who are incapable of or unwilling to change.³² Of the four, perhaps the last one is most damaging and the hardest to overcome. Often these individuals are long-term (sometimes popular) management or supervisory employees with considerable ability to wage a political campaign against the change process. At the very least, they can offset or prevent the empowerment of people trying to effect change. There is no proven technique for dealing with these individuals other than to engage them in a dialogue in an attempt to address their objections, while at the same time being prepared to minimize or remove them, if necessary.³³ As in most undertakings, removing barriers requires a team effort and collaboration is the key to success. Collaboration can be created and sustained by building a climate of trust, facilitating a positive interdependence at the individual and unit level, and supporting face-to-face interactions, whenever possible.³⁴

Failing to Create Short-Term Wins

Broad-based transformation takes a considerable amount of time. When people realize the length of time involved, their initial level of interest becomes difficult to sustain and their innate sense of urgency declines. Developing some short-term wins and rewarding change agents helps to combat this element of human nature. These wins play an important role in the overall transformation strategy by building momentum, by helping to fine tune the vision and strategies, by undermining cynics and self-serving change resisters, and, most importantly, by providing evidence to all that the goal is both achievable and worthy.³⁵ If using rewards to celebrate short-term wins, leaders should be realize that "...spontaneous and unexpected rewards are often more meaningful than the expected formal rewards."³⁶ Leaders should also be aware that

developing achievable, incremental transformation goals that are not just performance illusions or accounting gimmicks requires top-level management skills and underlines the fact that "...transformation is not a process involving leadership alone; good management is also essential."³⁷

Declaring Victory Too Soon

It is ironic, but many transformation efforts successfully navigate through the previously mentioned pitfalls only to fail at the doorstep of success because the leadership involved never fully appreciated that "...irrational and political resistance to change never fully dissipates."³⁸ Those resistive elements within an organization often take the occasion of a short-term win or an appreciation ceremony for change agents to derail the change effort by prematurely declaring victory.³⁹ Aside from this unfortunate aspect of human nature, the interdependent nature of today's complex business systems also works against the fragile nature of newly-changed business processes. Every change developed forces a change or modification to numerous related processes, each with their own stakeholders and level of pushback.⁴⁰ Large-scale changes may be interconnected throughout an organization's business processes and may take five to ten years (or more) to fully implement. Leaders must be aware of this fact and set realistic timeframes for their change project managers. Ultimately, leaders must ensure that the celebration of intermediate goals does not get interpreted by the workforce as a declaration of victory.⁴¹

Neglecting to Anchor Changes Firmly in the Corporate Culture

When change strategies lead to the development of new business practices that are incompatible with the preexisting organizational culture, they are always subject to

regression until they become firmly anchored in the organization's group norms and shared values.⁴² At the same time, it is important that cultural anchoring remain flexible within the organization, so that continuous change remains possible and a new "status quo" is not established.⁴³ Organizational culture is not easily manipulated and leaders must be aware of several factors when institutionalizing change. First, most alterations to the organizational culture occur at the end of the transformation process, not as a precursor. Next, success of the anchoring process depends largely on the validity of new practices and it requires a significant amount of verbal support and reinforcing communication. Finally, achieving a new equilibrium may require the replacement of key personnel or it may drive a particular decision on succession.⁴⁴

There are several general lessons to be learned from Mr. Kotter's review of the unsuccessful transformation efforts in corporate America. The first is that a successful change process typically requires a considerable investment of time and resources. Next is that there are a number of very critical steps and failure to complete any of them is an invitation to failure. However, the most important lesson is that the "... (change) process is never employed effectively unless it is driven by high-quality leadership, not just excellent management."⁴⁵

Can Leadership Be Taught?

The long-standing debate over whether leaders are simply born with a gift or whether leadership skills and traits can be developed still rages on, but growing shifts in the business, political, and social relationships related to organizational power are rapidly making the argument moot. There is "...growing consensus among leadership theorists and practitioners...that in a networked society with power and information

widely distributed, the presumption of “born leaders” along with command-and-control leadership models are inadequate.”⁴⁶ Many in academia, business, and politics are beginning to acquire this new perspective on leadership, even at the highest levels. David Gergen, who served in six different Presidential administrations, observed that even the President needs to think of himself as the center of a web, rather than as the top of a pyramid.⁴⁷ If one accepts this modern perspective as the new reality, then a fundamental question to be asked is: can leadership be taught?

A preeminent scholar on the subject of education, Donald Schon, has argued very eloquently and effectively that in teaching a practice (such as leadership) versus a body of knowledge that the individual cannot simply be *told* what they need to know, but rather they must learn to *see* for themselves. According to Schon, in order to succeed in the difficult task of leadership development, we need “...to study the experience of learning by doing and the artistry of good coaching...and we ought to search for examples wherever we can find them.”⁴⁸ Over the years, educators have consistently argued that students, particularly adults, learn best from their own experience. Drawing on this fact, Ronald Heifitz and his colleagues at Harvard University developed a new and distinctive approach to learning and teaching leadership known as Case-in-Point.

Case-in-Point teaching draws on a number of well-established learning traditions and methods, such as presentation of ideas, discussion and dialogue, coaching, writing as a form of disciplined reflection, and a variation of the classic case study approach.⁴⁹ The traditional case study method draws on practical experience of a related nature, but it is usually somewhat removed from the actual experience of the student. In contrast, “...case-in-point teaching and learning seeks to make optimal use of the student’s own

past and immediate experience.”⁵⁰ The case-in-point teaching rests on a number of crucial distinctions, but two of them are critical relative to transformation in a public-sector organization. The first distinction is *Authority versus Leadership*, which recognizes that the authority role is vital in providing organizational direction, setting institutional norms, and resolving conflicts, but it is often insufficient in achieving transformational goals.⁵¹ In large complex organizations, it is the role of leadership that “...assist(s) people in moving beyond the edge of familiar patterns into the unknown terrain of greater complexity, new learning, and new behaviors, usually requiring loss, grief, conflict, risk, stress, and creativity.”⁵² The other critical distinction is *Technical Problems Versus Adaptive Challenges*, which flows from the first. Technical problems, while convoluted and complex at times, can generally be resolved with the application of expert knowledge and existing procedures and addressing them falls within the domain of the authority role.⁵³ On the other hand, adaptive challenges are “...tangled, complex problems composed of multiple systems that resist technical analysis” and they often involve solutions demanding change to long-standing assumptions and values.⁵⁴ These distinctions may seem minor at first glance, but once fully appreciated, leadership becomes understood as being “...less about power, persuasion, and personality than about the capacity to help a group make progress on the toughest issues that lie in the space between known problems and unknown solutions.”⁵⁵

Another important feature of Case-in-Point teaching methodology is that it is neither idiosyncratic, nor personality-driven. The experience of the Harvard University staff and other practitioners prove that the approach is transferable and can be taught successfully in a number of different formats and variations, including the short-term

consultative and professional development scenarios. Central to the success of Case-in-Point teaching is the willingness of participants to engage in the dynamics of a small group and to publicly examine their personal experiences, especially failures.⁵⁶

Regardless of the specific nuances of any particular format, the learning objective is always to find "...ways of collaboratively turning your attention to the work and giving the work to the people who need to do it."⁵⁷ Interestingly, this very goal can also be readily interpreted as the desired end-state for supervisors under NSPS.

As they did in regard to Mr. Kotter's theories about the role of leadership in the change process, Kouzes and Posner also concur with Mr. Haifetz's assertion about the lack of idiosyncrasy in leadership development. In their view, "...leadership is not at all about personality, it's about practice."⁵⁸ As long as individuals are motivated and have the desire, good leadership skills can be instilled and developed in anyone from the top executive of the organization to the person on the front line through practice and feedback, role modeling and coaching.⁵⁹ Through twenty years of research, Kouzes and Posner have developed their Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership and, while the terminology may differ slightly, there is a striking and obvious correlation between their endorsed core leadership practices⁶⁰ and Mr. Kotter's Eight Step Process for successfully achieving process change.⁶¹ Figure 2 illustrates this systemic correlation:

<i>John P. Kotter's 8-Step Change Process</i>	<i>Kouzes & Posner 5 Practices of Exemplary Leadership</i>
1. Establishing a Sense of Urgency	1. Model the Way
2. Creating the Guiding Coalition	2. Inspire a Shared Vision
3. Developing a Vision and Strategy	3. Challenge the Process
4. Communicating the Change Vision	4. Enable Others to Act
5. Empowering Broad-Based Action	5. Encourage the Heart
6. Generating Short-Term Wins	
7. Consolidating Gains and Producing More Change	
8. Anchoring New Approaches in the Culture	

Figure 2. System Correlation

Current Navy Leadership Development Programs

The Navy currently utilizes a number of inter-agency (most notably USDA and DOD-sponsored) and some internally-developed leadership programs to develop and enhance the skills of its civilian cadre. The following is a representative, but not comprehensive, list of programs utilized by the Navy to develop leaders. The New Leader Program (NLP) is a six-month USDA leadership development program for the GS 7/11 target audience. It is designed to develop future public service leaders by providing leadership skills assessment and training, experiential learning opportunities, and individually tailored developmental assignments. The NAVSUP claimancy centrally funds the Corporate Management Development Programs (CMDP I and CMDP II), which are management and leadership development programs arranged in a dual track

format for employees at different grade levels. CMDP I is an 18-month program open to civilian employees at the GS-11/12 target grades. Developmental requirements start with successful completion of the USDA's Executive Leadership Program (ELP). Program members have ten months to complete all requirements of the ELP, plus an additional eight months to complete the NAVSUP-unique CMDP I requirements (if not completed during the 10 month ELP timeframe). CMDP II is a similarly structured eighteen month development program for GS-13/14 personnel, which utilizes the USDA Executive Potential Program as the core requirement. For strategic leader development at the GS-14/15 levels, the Navy utilizes the Defense Senior Leader Development Program (DSLDP), which was formerly known as the Defense Leadership and Management Program (DLAMP).⁶² While details of the new DSLDP are still forthcoming, it will be competency-based and represent a shift in focus to a more systematic and deliberate development of strategic leaders in a joint, interagency, and multi-national environment.

In comparison, the U.S. Army has taken a more holistic and systematic approach to civilian leadership development under their Army Leaders for the 21st Century (AL 21) program. One of the program goals is to utilize the Army "Pentathlete" Leader model and develop their civilian leaders in the same manner as officers and NCOs. The plan is to leverage "...the flexibilities of the DoD Human Capital Strategy and the National Security Personnel System to support and enhance the overall leadership development process."⁶³ Responsibility for oversight of AL 21 has been assigned to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (ASA(M&RA)) and management controls, financial resources, and measures of effectiveness have been

identified. In addition, a research and development program has been institutionalized to identify current and future program shortfalls and to explore leadership development best practices in the DA, DOD, academia, and industry.⁶⁴

The AI 21 Program employs a leadership development model based on three domains of learning: operational experience; institutional learning; and self-development. All Department of Army civilian students attending a senior service school, such as the Army War College, are required to be available for a new, career-broadening operational assignment upon completion of the curriculum, just like their military counterparts. The institutional learning component of AI 21 is arranged in five distinct tiers ranging from foundational courses up to advanced senior leadership curricula, such as the Service Colleges and the new DSLDP. The final domain of the Army leadership developmental model, self-development, is comprised of self-paced special interest activities, such as professional enhancement reading, writing programs, and strategic leadership conferences. The long-range goal of AL 21 is to have multi-functional Civilian Corps leaders structured in eight Broad Career Groups rather than the current fragmented career fields and supported with integrated functional and leadership training that mirrors the Army military model.

While it is not absolutely necessary to have a leadership program driven at the Department-level, the Army approach would seem to have some obvious inherent advantages. Designating a top-level program champion communicates a clear and powerful message to the workforce regarding the organization's commitment to leadership development and it provides an organizational entity devoted to the continued, on-going funding of leadership training. Generally, the leadership

development programs utilized by the Navy are very good in quality and have a strong leadership development focus. However, their effect is limited because of two primary reasons. Historically, research indicates that leadership development opportunities, in the private sector as well as the public sector, are typically offered and undertaken too late in the career path for maximum effect.⁶⁵ The second factor is that, due to their long-term nature and the age demographics of the target audience, relatively small numbers of individuals actually apply for and get accepted into the Navy programs.⁶⁶ So, even when you consider all of the significant improvements made in Navy program availability and content, there is still the troubling issue of insufficient throughput.

Conclusions

The leadership theorists I reviewed for this thesis had various nomenclatures, models, and frameworks for describing what they believed to be the relevant aspects of leadership. Fortunately, there were several common themes or maxims that ran through all or most of them. First, that the *soft* skills of leadership play a much larger role than the *hard* science of management in determining the success of transformation. Second, that leadership skills may be imparted to the willing through practice and reinforcement. Finally, and not so glaringly obvious, is that development of leadership skills need to occur at all levels of the organization, "...not only at the top of the hierarchy, with a capital L, but also in a more modest sense (*l*) throughout the enterprise."⁶⁷ After all, leadership is not the province of a chosen few, but, rather, something that is required of a critical mass of people at all levels in order for a change process to succeed.⁶⁸ The goal now is to apply this new knowledge to improve Navy leadership development and effectively enhance the ability of NSPS and L6S to achieve the goals of Sea Enterprise.

Recommendations

The following recommendations apply the theoretical concepts of Kotter, Kouzes, Posner, and Parks to the existing Navy leadership programs and the procedures that underlie the Transformation enabling processes, NSPS and L6S. They are listed in no particular order because, while they would operate synergistically in their effect, there is no interdependency requirement in their application. Each one of the recommendations should provide stand-alone value-added if Navy leadership should decide to implement.

- **Navy leadership development programs should be made available outside the standard requirement to enter into a six, twelve, or eighteen month program.** The Navy should offer leadership enhancement opportunities outside the standard requirement to enter into a six, twelve, or multi-year development program, This would be a cost-effective improvement over the current situation because it would make the leadership development element more attractive and accessible to a greater percentage of the target audience and it would help solve the low Navy program throughput issue.
- **Leadership training should be mandatory for all current supervisors and process change managers and it should be a key element of the Individual Development Plans for targeted “fast track” employees, such as career interns and mid-level hires.** Barring any legal or labor agreement constraints, this recommendation should be implemented through a wide variety of cost-effective sources, such as computer-based training, developmental temporary duty assignments, coaching and mentoring training, etc. A critical point to remember is that effective leadership skills are acquired

through sustained practice and reinforcement. So, finding the perfect leadership development course is far less important than ensuring that the opportunity for skills enhancement is offered on a continuous, on-going basis to the widest possible audience.

- **Combat organizational complacency by making strong leadership results a performance objective in NSPS.** Battle entrenched organizational complacency may be cost-effective and sustainable by establishing strong leadership results as a primary performance measure in NSPS (i.e., process efficiency improvements, unit performance increases, cost savings). By fundamentally changing the measure of success at the individual level, an organization can propagate strong leadership and begin to defeat the classic elements of resistance to change, such as human nature, past success, inward-looking focus, functional metrics, lack of critical feedback, etc.,⁶⁹
- **Establish “leadership forums” at the organizational level for supervisors, process change managers, and interns.** To support the achievement of new leadership results, small “leadership forums” should be established for each of the indicated groups at the unit level. Following the Case-in-Point model, they should be small groups, ideally with no more than six to twelve members. This type of setting would be self-sustaining and would force individuals to participate and to “...reflect critically on (their) own practice of leadership both past and present.”⁷⁰ Through exploration of their past mistakes, missed opportunities, and disappointments, forum members will experience continuous leadership learning.

- **Establish Mr. Kotter’s Eight Step Change Process as an integral part of the L6S procedures.** The Navy systems commands have developed in-house L6S cadres, which are deployed to discover and exploit more cost-effective and efficient methods for delivering products and services to Navy customers.⁷¹ The systems commands have contractual control over the content of the L6S training and the Eight Step Process could easily become an integral part of the curricula. Verifying that the leadership objectives of the Eight Step Process have been achieved should become one of the primary functions of the Project Champion. These individuals are not saddled with the myriad of day-to-day L6S process change management functions and are uniquely positioned to ensure the critical leadership steps have been accomplished. This minor change to the current L6S process would be self-sustaining and should prove cost-effective by increasing the success rate of L6S initiatives.

Summary

All leadership theorists agree that successful transformation is a tremendous challenge, but leadership is the one great force multiplier in achieving the desired end-state. As we move further into the 21st century, it is evident that the Navy is engaged in a prolonged, maybe even permanent, era of change. Transformation is no longer considered a time-definite program, but a permanent and on-going process. In this ever-changing business process environment, it is imperative that all Navy activities, especially the military-civilian “hybrid” organizations, become engines of continuous learning. Applying the time and resources necessary to develop a skilled and competent cadre of 21st century leaders should be the first step in our organizational evolution.

Endnotes

¹ Gordon R. England, *Naval Transformation Roadmap 2003: Assured Access & Power Projection...From The Sea* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Navy, 2003), 3.

² Ibid., 5.

³ Ibid., 82-83.

⁴ Ibid., 84.

⁵ Ibid., 88.

⁶ Ibid., 93.

⁷ *National Security Personnel System Home Page*, NSPS 101 on-line course, available from <http://www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps/> ; Internet; accessed 21 March 2008.

⁸ Jason R. Miller, *An Analysis of the Sea Enterprise Program*, Master's Thesis (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, June 2005), 67.

⁹ Ibid., 68.

¹⁰ John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 26.

¹¹ Typically, technology insertion enabled personnel reductions in the FY87-94 period. Further reductions were driven by Reductions In Force (RIF), Rightsizing initiatives, and Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) actions in the FY95-02 period. The Transformation period started in FY03, but only incremental personnel reductions have been experienced thus far.

¹² Kotter, *Leading Change*, 26. The comparison of management and leadership skills is captured in Exhibit 3, *Management versus Leadership*.

¹³ Ibid., 27.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 40.

¹⁷ Ibid., 35.

¹⁸ James M. Kouzes & Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge*, 3rd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 14.

¹⁹ Kotter, *Leading Change*, 48.

²⁰ Ibid., 57.

²¹ Miller, 28. The author made this observation in his thesis based on his review of the earlier leadership theory of John P. Kotter, but his point is still relevant and appropriate in the context of this article.

²² Kotter, *Leading Change*, 68.

²³ Miller, 28.

²⁴ Kotter, *Leading Change*, 70.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Kouzes & Posner, 15.

²⁷ Miller, 30.

²⁸ Kotter, *Leading Change*, 89. Based on data gathered from a number of historical examples, Exhibit 1 depicts the actual communication percentage of a typical organizational vision message campaign.

²⁹ Mr. Heifetz's Case-in-Point methodology, covered later in this paper, makes heavy use of metaphors, such as "move from the dance floor to the balcony", which conveys the message that the teacher and the student must periodically remove themselves from daily involvement in the change process in order to view and comprehend the totality of the transformation initiative.

³⁰ Kotter, *Leading Change*, 99-100.

³¹ Kouzes & Posner, 36-37.

³² Kotter, *Leading Change*, 102.

³³ Ibid., 114.

³⁴ Kouzes & Posner, 242.

³⁵ Kotter, *Leading Change*, 123.

³⁶ Kouzes & Posner, 333.

³⁷ Kotter, *Leading Change*, 129.

³⁸ Ibid., 132.

³⁹ Ibid., 133.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 136.

⁴¹ Miller, 33.

⁴² Kotter, *Leading Change*, 148.

⁴³ Miller, 33.

⁴⁴ Kotter, *Leading Change*, 157. All three of the points made in the paragraph are captured in Exhibit 2, “Anchoring Change in a Culture”.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 20.

⁴⁶ Sharon Daloz Parks, *Leadership Can Be Taught* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2005), 4.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 53.

⁴⁸ Donald A. Schon, *Educating the Reflective Practitioner: Toward a New Design for Teaching and Learning in the Professions* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1987), 17.

⁴⁹ Parks, 6.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 7.

⁵¹ Ibid., 9.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., 10.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 46.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 74-75.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 190.

⁵⁸ Kouzes & Posner, 13.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 386.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 22.

⁶¹ Kotter, *Leading Change*, 21.

⁶² “The DSLDP Program,” 2008, linked from *Joint Leader Development Division Home Page*, at “Items of Interest,” available from <http://www.cpms.osd.mil/jlidd/>; Internet; accessed 21 March 2008.

⁶³ U.S. Department of the Army, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3/5/7, *Army Leaders for the 21st Century – Implementation Guidance* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, October 2006), 4.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 11.

⁶⁵ John P. Kotter, *A Force for Change: How Leadership Differs from Management* (New York: The Free Press, 1990), 120-121.

⁶⁶ Top-level Department of Navy statistics are not available regarding Navy civilian personnel participation in leadership development training. However, extrapolation based on available NAVSUP data would suggest that Navy participation is significantly lower than Army participation at most grade levels, even when adjusted for the relative size of the Departments.

⁶⁷ Kotter, *Leading Change*, 175.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 176.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁷⁰ Parks, 75.

⁷¹ Gordon E. Meeks, III, *Center for Navy Business Excellence: A Catalyst for Business Transformation*, Master's Thesis (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, December 2005), 79.